

Former America First Leader Now Promoter With Big Business, Military Ties

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By SAM KUSHNER

CHICAGO — "In the crucial hour, they demand risk taking and sheer will from leadership, when lesser men — overawed by the odds — have lost their nerve."

The voice was that of Frank Barnett, speaker at the Sixth National Military-Industrial Conference. He was the keynoter of this meeting of several hundred of America's most influential industrialists and most prominent military leaders.

Represented in this assemblage of cold warriors held last year in Chicago, in addition to the well known personages from the armed forces and the business world, was the FBI Chief Inspector William C. Sullivan from J. Edgar Hoover's office was an outstanding speaker.

This year when the same group met, also in Chicago, the composition of the group changed little, with one exception. Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr., Inspector General of the Central Intelligence Agency, addressed the conference April 12.

WHO IS BARNETT

Frank R. Barnett has been credited with being the mastermind behind the Military-Industry sessions. He is the director of research of the multi-million dollar Richardson Foundation. In the officially released biography of Barnett the conference stated:

"He is a cold war strategist and proponent of a plan to recruit iron curtain exiles into a legion of Freedom. He is a director of the American Friends of Russian Freedom."

"Risk taking," as Barnett so calmly explained to his audience, is a "common feature" in "business, politics and war."

What is this Military-Industrial Institute, which has attracted to its myriad of conferences outstanding personalities from highly diversified fields? Whence springs this organization that has held the attention of military personnel at the National War College in Washington in July 1959?

The institute is the creature of a high sounding organization called the "Institute for American Strategy". In March, 1955, the Institute held its first public sessions in Chicago.

In a three-day meeting co-sponsored by the Society of American Military Engineers, the Illinois Institute of Technology, the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry and varied branches of the armed forces, the first Military Industry conference was born.

It has now become an annual event, sponsored and organized by the Institute For American Strategy.

But the timing of the birth of the Institute, the personnel of the board and the identity of supporters have more than passing interest. The IAS now seeks to pass itself off as a patriotic organization, and is not too anxious to have some of its more sordid connections brought to light.

The Military-Industrial conferences and the American Security Council, reputed to be the nation's biggest anti-labor blacklist agency, were born within months of each other.

The top executive bodies of both organizations read like an interlocking directorate. Among the top officers of the blacklist agency who are on the board of the cold war Institute for American Strategy are:

Frank R. Barnett, of the Richardson Foundation.
Harry A. Bullis, formerly of General Mills, Inc.
John M. Fisher, Chief Security

officer of Sears Roebuck and Chairman of the Board of the American Security Council.

Daniel A. Sullivan of Armour Research Foundation.

General Robert E. Wood, retired chairman of the Board of Sears Roebuck.

GEN. WOOD'S ROLE

Mainspring for the formation of both organizations was Gen. Wood, who in his earlier years was the head of the isolationist America First Committee, which had the avowed support of anti-semites, Nazi Bundists and self-proclaimed American Fascists.

After the America First fiasco, during which time Wood, a former army quartermaster, became head of the Sears, Roebuck chain, little was heard from him for about a decade.

But he did not rest on his reactionary laurels.

Wood personally solicited membership to the fledgling American Security Council. To run the affairs of this organization he recruited much of Sears Roebuck's personnel. His chief of security, former FBI agent John Fisher, became the boss of the outfit. This has been documented in past articles in The Worker.

NEW BUDDIES

Simultaneously the Institute for American Strategy was born. But this time Wood would not make the same mistake he made in the 1940s with the American First Committee, "it seemed." Instead of support from Gerald L. K. Smith, Father Coughlin and others of this ilk, he sought a new set of associates.

Military leaders, business tycoons and government officials were his new buddies. Greetings were sent to the conferences by President Eisenhower. Generals such as Maxwell Taylor vied to speak there. Foreign guests addressed the meetings.

It was the same old Wood, but in a "new image."

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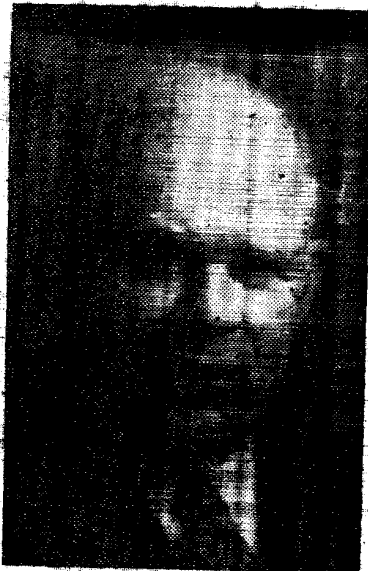
Speakers from Sears-Roebuck, not Robert Wood of the Birch Society, held forth on the platforms. But despite all precautions and the loud protestations of Daniel Sullivan that none of the "lunatic fringe" were in this "respectable organization", the facts show otherwise.

Frank Flick, Chicago industrialist, who shared the platform with self-proclaimed leaders of the John Birch Society in Chicago, was a speaker at the Military-Industrial Institute this year.

Dr. Gerhart Niemyer, one of the editors of the neo-fascist National Review was another speaker this year.

Professor Anthony T. Buscaren, of Le Moyne College, a member of the Educational Advisory Committee of the Conference, has been in the past few years a featured speaker at the Congress of American Freedom, clearly a group belonging to the fascist "lunatic fringe."

But these are just some of the lesser lights in the military institute picture. Big corporation heads, from General Mills, Allis Chalmers and others who gave of their money and time for the America First Committee are reunited with their old boss, Gen. Wood, in the Military-Industrial Conferences.



JAMES W. BARKER, former chairman of Allstate Insurance Company, a Sears subsidiary, spoke at this year's Military-Industrial Conference.



GEN. ROBERT E. WOOD

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